

Reinvesting in America's Watersheds: A Special Report

OHIO OHIO OHIO OHIO

DAMS IN DANGER PEOPLE AT RISK?

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For 50 years, America's small upstream dams have provided for flood protection, municipal water supplies, wildlife habitat, water for livestock, and recreational opportunities. But time has taken its toll. Many of the nation's dams, including those in Ohio, are in desperate need of repair. If problems are not corrected, the consequences are grave—to both people and the environment. Funding is needed, and now is the time to act.



Across the Nation...

More than 600 dams need to be rebuilt and upgraded to ensure the safety and health of those downstream. In addition, another 1,500 dams need repairs so they can continue to provide flood control, municipal water supplies, recreational activities, water for livestock, and wildlife habitat. An estimated \$540 million is needed to rehabilitate these dams.



Small watershed projects

Ten thousand dams built under Small Watershed Programs make up a \$9 billion infrastructure. These dams provide more than \$800 million in benefits annually. The majority of these dams were built for a 50-year lifespan and some have already or soon will reach that mark. Funds for building these dams have come from four programs: Flood Control Act of 1944 (PL-78-534); Pilot Watershed Program; Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1953 (PL 83-566); and Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D).

In Ohio...

The Upper Hocking Watershed Pilot Project encompasses 49 square miles (31,418 acres) in Fairfield County. It protects hundreds of residences and businesses, eight miles of roads, and 22 bridges around Lancaster from flooding, sedimentation, and erosion damages.



Ohio's small watershed projects with dams

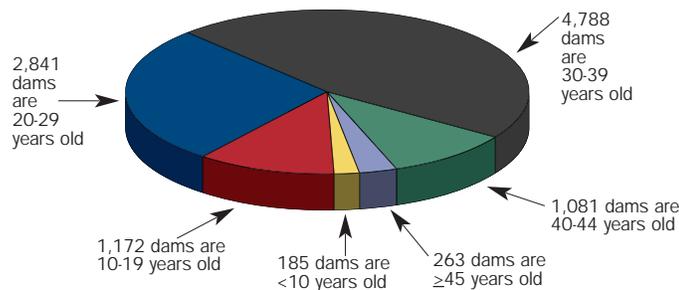
Between 1955 and 1961, 29 dams and two miles of channel were constructed as part of the project. Twenty-five of these dams need major repair or upgrades to meet state dam safety laws. For example:

- Two dams have been reclassified as high hazard because there is a potential for loss of life if the dam fails. These dams must be upgraded to comply with Ohio's dam safety law. The concrete outlet on one of these dams is deteriorating and needs to be repaired soon to keep it safe.

- Rock Mill Lake Park dam is one of two high haz-

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Our Nation's Aging Dams



DAMS IN DANGER

PEOPLE AT RISK?

Continued from front

ard dams that have deteriorating concrete outlets that need to be repaired.

- Greenfield Lake State Park dam is one of seven dams with rusting corrugated metal pipes. If not replaced, the pipes will disintegrate and the dam may fail. All seven dams must be modified to meet state dam safety law.

- Fourteen dams have seriously corroding corrugated metal pipe spillways and must be replaced to prevent dam failure.

- **BENEFITS:** The watershed provides enormous benefits for Lancaster communities by providing flood protection, reducing sedimentation and damage to roads and bridges. Also, Greenfield Lake and Rock Mill Lake provide excellent recreational opportunities. The dams have contributed to quality of life by controlling erosion, improving water quality, and providing fish and wildlife habitat. Nine dams now protect residences and other buildings that have been built since the dams were constructed. The Ohio Department of Development estimates that the area's population will grow another 28 percent by 2015, making it more critical than ever to restore these dams.

- **IMPACTS:** If rehabilitation needs aren't addressed, there could be significant impacts for thousands of people, including loss of life, destruction of property, and loss of vital public infrastructure. It has been estimated that \$276,000 in benefits can be attributed annually to the 25 structures that need repair or upgrades.

The original cost of this project was more than \$2 million. \$1.7 million was federal expenditure for primarily construction, and \$300,000 was a local cost absorbed by landowners in the watershed for land rights, relocation of utilities, and the operation and maintenance of these structures.

- **SOLUTION:** Nearly \$3 million is needed to repair and upgrade the Upper Hocking Watershed dams. The Hunters Run Conservancy District does an excellent job of operating and maintaining the structures on a limited budget, but doesn't have the funds for a major restoration.



THE PROBLEMS. Rusting metal pipe spillways (above) and deteriorating concrete risers (left) are two problems facing dams in the Upper Hocking Watershed. Huge investments have already been made to build these structures. Reinvestment in the small watershed program is needed to maintain the dams' integrity and protect public health and safety.



WHY REPAIR THE DAMS? The dams provide many recreational opportunities, as well as protecting residents and property from flooding. The current situation poses a safety and health threat to people, communities, and our wildlife.

A Call to Action in Ohio

17

dams need to be rebuilt and upgraded to protect life and property in downstream areas

29

dams need repairs to safeguard municipal water supplies, provide flood control, and protect natural resources

\$7 million

is needed to rehabilitate those dams to protect people and natural resources